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## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Box Patent Application  
 Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
 Washington, D.C. 20231

Date: November 7, 2000

Atty. Docket No. SAA-52

11/07/00  
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 09/707604  
 11/07/00

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the original patent application of:

Inventors: Nan Shan Hwu, Jay Ward, Gerard Picon and David L. Kryger, have made an invention pertaining to:

For: A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AN ACTIVE STANBY CONTROL SYSTEM ON A NETWORK

Enclosed are:

- ☒ 14 pages specification, 4 pages of claims, 1 page of Abstract, 3 sheets of informal drawings (figs. 1-3).
- ☒ An executed Assignment of the invention to the Schneider Automation Inc.
- ☒ An executed Declaration combined with Power of Attorney.

## FEE CALCULATION

	Claims Filed / Extra	Rate	Basic Fee 37 CFR 1.16(a) \$ 710.00
Total Claims(37 CFR 1.16(a))	20 - 20 = 0 x	\$18.00	\$ 0.00
Independent Claims	3 - 3 = 0 x	\$80.00	\$ 0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE			\$ 710.00

- ☒ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 19-3875 (SAA-52).
- ☒ \$ 710.00 to cover the total filing fee of \$ 710.00.
- ☒ Any additional fees which may be required. Please credit any overpayment to Account No. 19-3875 (SAA-52).

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:  
Hwu et al.

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Attorney Docket No.: SAA-52



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Kimberly A. Annel

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A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AN  
ACTIVE STANDBY CONTROL SYSTEM ON A NETWORK

DESCRIPTION

Related Applications

The subject matter of the present application is related to the following commonly assigned applications, U.S. Patent Application No. 09/612,636, filed on July 7, 2000, entitled "A Method And Apparatus For An Active Standby Control System On A Network" and U.S. Patent Application No. \_\_/\_\_,\_\_, Attorney Docket No. SAA-54 (401 P 237), filed simultaneously with this patent application, entitled, "A Method And Apparatus For An Active Standby Control System On A Network." The contents of these Applications are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a control system. More particularly, the present invention relates to a control system utilizing a backup configuration of controllers on a network.

Background of the Invention

Controllers such as programmable logic controllers (PLC) have been implemented in duplex or back-up system configurations where downtime of a system cannot be tolerated. Such a control system delivers high reliability through redundancy. Generally, the duplex configuration incorporates a pair of PLCs assembled in a hot or active standby, or back-up, configuration wherein one PLC is operating in a primary mode and the other PLC is functioning in a secondary or standby/backup mode. The primary controller runs an application by scanning a user program to control and monitor a remote IO network. The other, secondary,

controller acts as the active standby controller. The standby controller does not run the application and it does not operate the remote IO. The standby controller is updated by the primary controller with each scan. The standby controller is then ready to assume control of the control system within one scan if the primary controller fails to operate or is removed from operation.

The primary and secondary controllers are interchangeable and can be swapped or switched when desired. Either controller can be placed in the primary state. The active standby configuration requires the non-primary controller to be placed in the standby mode to secure the system's redundancy. The controllers continuously communicate with each other to ensure the operability of the control system. The communication among the controllers is used to determine if a swap of the controllers should be initiated due to a system failure or by election of an operator.

Factory automation systems are increasingly being integrated with communication networks. Control systems are being implemented on networks for remote monitoring and control of devices, processes, etc. System failures involving the primary mode controller that can shut down the control system are avoided by having a back-up controller readily available in hot/active standby mode to replace the failing primary mode controller.

Signal communication between device modules on a network requires network identifiers, i.e., Internet Protocol address, Media Access Control address; to be assigned to these devices throughout the network. Problems arise when the network device or controller fails and must be replaced. The failing primary controller on a network cannot be readily exchanged with a standby controller because the network identifier assigned to the network device, specifically the standby controller, is not readily associated with the primary controller.

Other drawbacks exist due to the physical structure of the control system. The control system utilizes a backplane for operably connecting modules for communicating throughout the network. Generally, data transfers are sent from a

central processing unit (CPU) of the primary controller to a network interface module of the primary controller via the primary controller's backplane. A 10 Mb/sec fiber optic cable communicably links the pair of controllers wherein data flows between the network interface module of the primary controller and the network interface module of the secondary controller. From the secondary controller's network interface module, the data must again travel through a backplane to reach the CPU of the secondary controller. Communication between selected network modules involving the backplane hampers the transfer of data and adversely affects the performance of the data transfer. Due to the relatively slow backplane interface, this configuration is inadequate when faster data transfer rates on the control system are desired.

The present invention is provided to solve these and other problems.

#### Summary of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a method and an apparatus for exchanging controllers of a control system configured in an active standby, duplex or redundant set-up. The configuration of the control system increases the rate and reliability of the data transfer between the active and standby controllers. It is an object of this invention to provide an active standby control system integrated on a communication network capable of replacing a controller without significantly disrupting the performance of the control system or the network.

One embodiment of the present invention is directed to a method of providing an active standby control system. A first (primary) and a second (secondary) controller, each controller having an operating state, are operably connected to each other and to a network. A network identifier, i.e., Internet Protocol address (IP), Media Access Control address (MAC); is associated with each controller. The operating state of each controller is sensed wherein the network identifier associated with each controller is determined by the operating state of each respective controller.

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The control system operates normally until a failure in the primary mode controller is detected or a controller exchange is selected by an operator. Upon detecting a primary mode controller failure, the secondary mode controller configured in active standby is substituted in place of the failed primary mode controller. The network identifier initially associated with the original primary mode controller is associated with the newly substituted primary controller. Thus the network identifier of the control system's primary mode controller remains the same regardless of which controller is functioning as the primary mode controller. The exchange of the controllers is accomplished without significantly disrupting the performance of the overall control system by substantially suspending or delaying the network's operation. Accordingly, the associated network identifiers of the controllers are also exchanged. Alternatively, any combination of IP and MAC addresses of the controllers can be exchanged.

Yet another embodiment of the present invention is directed to an active standby system for a control system. The active standby system comprises a first and a second controller. Each controller has an operating state. A high speed fiber optic network cable operably connects the first and second controllers for transferring data between the controllers at a rate of at least 100 Mb/s. A network identifier is assigned to each controller and is responsive to the operating state of the respective controllers. Each controller comprises: a processor; a co-processor; an operating system executed by the processor; and, a co-operating system executed by the co-processor wherein the operating system and the co-operating system cooperate to transfer data between the first and second controllers.

A further embodiment of the present invention includes remote IO modules such as sensors, relays, gauges, valves, message displays, switches, limit switches, proximity switches, motor starters, motor controllers and any other like device as well as traditional IO modules for control systems; operably connected to the control system.

Other features and advantages of the invention, which are believed to be novel and nonobvious, will be apparent from the following specification taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which there is shown a preferred embodiment of the invention. Reference is made to the claims for interpreting the full scope of the invention which is not necessarily represented by such embodiment.

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram showing an active standby control system network known by one of ordinary skill in the field of this invention prior to this invention;

FIGURE 2 is a block diagram depicting an embodiment of the present invention; and,

FIGURE 3 is a block diagram of an embodiment of the firmware organization of the present invention.

#### Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

While this invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms, there is shown in the drawings and will herein be described in detail preferred embodiments of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to the embodiments illustrated.

Controllers have been integrated with control systems in an active, hot standby or backup configuration wherein the primary controller can be swapped or exchanged by operator personnel with a readily available backup controller when a failure to the primary controller is detected. Factory automation networks allow operator personnel to monitor the control system from a remote site. In an active standby configuration, a pair of controllers, preferably programmable logic

controllers, are arranged in communication with each other. One of the controllers is designated a primary controller and actively monitors and controls a network while the other controller functions in a hot standby mode for backing up the primary controller. If the primary controller fails or is taken out of service, the backup controller will be swapped in its place without significantly disrupting network operations. An additional concern for a network is the network identifier associated with each network device. Each individual device on the network is assigned a network identifier, preferably an Internet Protocol (IP) address. Thus, the exchange of controllers on the network also requires the exchange of their respective network identifiers.

Shown in FIGURE 1 is an active standby control system 10 generally known by one of ordinary skill in the field of this invention. The system 10 includes a pair of controllers 12 operably connected to a network 13 in a hot standby, back-up, redundant configuration. The controller 12 also includes a central processing unit (CPU) module 26, a hot standby module 20, and a remote IO head 18. The controller's modules are positioned in a rack unit and the location of the modules within the rack unit is arbitrary such that the location of each module within the rack unit is not standard. The hot standby module 20 of each controller 12 is operably connected to each other using a fiber optic cable 17 capable of handling data transfers at a rate of approximately 10 Mb/s. The CPU modules 26 of each controller 12 are operably connected to a processor unit 19 such as a computer, personal computer or any other device having processing capabilities. The serial link 17 connection between the CPU modules 26 can be either low-speed or high-speed. The processor unit 19 always communicates with the primary controller at the same network identifier regardless of which controller 12 is functioning as the primary controller. The respective remote IO heads 18 are also connected to each other, and to the local and remote IO network 23, i.e., drops 24.



Existing control systems as shown in FIGURE 1 utilize a backplane during data transfers from the primary to the standby controller. The modules shown in FIGURE 1 are operably connected to the system 10 and each other through a backplane of each controller 12. The modules of each controller 12 must  
5 communicate with each other to successfully exchange their respective network identifiers. Determinism of the system's communication is adversely affected by delays or failures in data transfers between the controllers 12. Communication between the two controllers requires that data be sent from the primary CPU module 26 to the primary hot standby module 20 via the backplane of the  
10 controller 12, typically including an ASIC interface. The data is further transmitted to the hot standby module 20 of the secondary controller via a 10 Mb/s fiber optic link 17. The data is then transmitted through the backplane of the secondary controller and another ASIC interface of the standby controller to the CPU module 26 of the secondary controller.

15 FIGURE 2 is directed to an embodiment of the present invention for a control system wherein the transfer rate of data between the controllers 12 is significantly increased. Each controller includes a CPU module 26. Embedded within the CPU module 26 is a dedicated hot-standby transfer port. The hot-standby transfer port of each controller 12 is operably connected via a 100  
20 Mb/s fiber optic cable 17. A processing unit 19 is operably connected to the controllers 12, preferably through a Universal Serial Bus (USB) connection or a communication card in a PCMCIA slot. As with earlier active-standby control systems, the network processing unit 19 communicates with the primary controller 12 at the same network identifier, regardless of which controller 12 is functioning  
25 as the primary.

The present invention significantly improves data transfer rates between the controllers by incorporating a higher rated fiber optic cable 17 and eliminating a significant portion of data transfers over the backplane. Data is transmitted from

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Specifically, the OS code initiates all hot-standby activity; prepares and controls the transfer of data to the CoPro shared memory (primary controller); retrieves data from the CoPro's shared memory and places it into the appropriate OS memory location (standby controller); interacts with the remote IO (RIO) head

16 for active standby diagnostics; and controls serial and MB+ address changes on the controller.

The CoPro code builds messages for transmission on the Ethernet connection (primary controller); processes incoming data messages and puts data in shared memory (standby controller); monitors the health of the Ethernet communication; initiates the healthy communication message (primary controller); monitors the active standby health communication message; and is responsible for all inter-station communication, i.e., change state, application program download requests, etc.

The transfer of data from the primary controller to the standby controller is preferably by blocks and includes: state RAM (located variables); all unlocated global variables; all instances of DFB and EFB data; SFC variable area and system bits and words. It is also possible to upload the configuration and application program from the primary controller and download it to the standby controller, thus providing an identical image and enabling the standby controller to take over as the primary controller.

The main processor 30 communicates with the co-processor 28 at the beginning of every scan. If the co-processor 28 reports any error, or does not respond within a predetermined period, the primary controller will attempt to transfer control to the standby controller through the RIO link 18. If the standby controller responds, the primary controller releases control and the standby controller will operate in stand-alone mode. If the standby controller does not respond to the primary controller's request to assume control, the primary controller will operate in stand-alone mode and continue to scan the IO.

When a controller has an error, it can report the error to the other controller by sending a message to the other controller through either the fiber optic cable 17 or the RIO link 18. The controllers 12 can also identify a "failure to respond error" by detecting a time-out during the link activity. To ensure that the standby controller can detect the error as soon as possible, the primary controller is

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IO scanner's connection prior to exchanging the IP addresses. This will minimize the time required by the new primary IO scanner to establish a connection with a remote device 24. The time to reset the IO scanner's connection is in the order of several milliseconds. The IO scanner will establish new connections and start scanning in approximately 200 milliseconds. Alternatively, a reverse address resolution protocol (RARP) request can be broadcast by the primary controller to discover its IP address. In this case, the primary controller broadcasts its physical address and a RARP server replies with the primary controller's IP address.

For the redundant control system to function properly, the primary and secondary controllers must be solving an identical logic program, which is updated on every scan by a data transfer of state RAM between the two controllers. By default, the standby controller is set to go offline if a logic mismatch is detected between the programs of the standby and primary controllers. A controller swap will not occur if the non-primary controller is offline. An operator of the control system can select to override the system default for a logic mismatch and thus allow a swap between controllers 12 to occur if a logic mismatch exists between the controllers.

Under normal operating conditions, both controllers 12 have the same application program loaded. System checks are in place to detect if there is a logic mismatch. A logic mismatch can occur when the application program is initially the same on both the primary and secondary controller, but an on-line change has occurred to the program of one of the controllers. A logic mismatch can also occur when the primary and standby controllers have different applications from the onset of the control system's execution. The system's default provides that when a mismatch exists, the standby controller is placed in the off-line state and a swap of the controllers is not allowed. However, there are situations when it is desirable to allow a logic mismatch to exist and to continue to operate the system in the active standby configuration. It is important to note that if the settings are configured to ignore a logic mismatch and a swap of the controllers is executed,

the standby controller will assume the role of the primary controller and will execute a different application program from the previous controller 12.

Once an active standby control system is operating, it is normally not shut down, even for periodic maintenance. However, there are conditions where the user desires to modify the application program without disrupting the control system. One situation in which a user may desire to ignore a logic mismatch between the controllers is during on-line editing of one of the controller's programs. As is readily apparent, any edits executed on-line will immediately trigger a logic mismatch between the controllers, therefore the settings on the controller must be set accordingly to allow the difference between the two programs. After the edits have been made, the user can either use an application transfer feature or the processing unit 19 to reload the standby controller with the edited primary program.

The following steps are provided as an exemplification of the on-line editing sequence and are not to be used as a limitation to the present invention as claimed and disclosed within this application. The logic mismatch feature is enabled to allow the standby controller to remain on-line in the event that a logic mismatch between the controllers is detected. The user can now make any edits or modifications to the application program of the standby controller. After completion of the edits, the new program is tested by initiating a switch-over of the controllers. If unsuccessful, another switch-over can be initiated to return to the original program. If the edits to the program work as expected, an application transfer can be executed to synchronize the programs between the controllers. Finally, the logic mismatch feature is disabled. Generally, it will not matter whether edits to the program application are first made to the primary controller or the standby controller. However, any edits made to the application program of the primary controller are immediately executed.

Another situation where it is desirable to ignore a logic mismatch is when a systematic shutdown process is implemented in the control system. The

systematic shutdown process requires the primary controller to be configured to control and monitor the normal operation of the control system and the standby controller is configured to control a systematic shutdown of the control system in the event of a failure to the primary controller. When a problem with the primary controller occurs, the controllers will swap and the systematic shutdown procedure of the new controller will be executed to shut down the control system. Thus, in this type of control system configuration, a logic mismatch exists between the controllers, yet it is undesirable to place the standby controller in an off-line mode.

Some controller application programs are written wherein the programmer controls the logical and physical storage of data. The check for a logic mismatch for these types of programs examines both the data and the location of the data. Other controller programs are written wherein the programmer only controls the logical storage of the data and not the physical storage of the data. In these types of programs, the storage of the data is dynamic and controlled by the platform of which the program is run. Therefore, the detection of a logic mismatch will not include examining the physical location of the stored data.

Other situations where it is desirable to ignore a logic mismatch exists where support of off-line modified projects are being downloaded to the standby controller or when getting up to date process data transferred from the active controller.

A transfer application feature provides the user with the ability to configure the standby controller from the primary controller. The transfer application copies the full program and ensures that the controllers have identical configurations. The transfer is accomplished over the communication link, preferably a fiber optic cable 17, operably connecting the control processing units of each controller 12. The user requests the transfer through the standby controller, preferably at a front panel keypad. The complete application program and data, including state RAM, will be copied from the primary controller to the standby controller. The standby controller will then validate the transferred

program and if valid, the CPU will automatically start. The user can specify the operating mode to be executed after a program transfer to either "run" or "off-line." The transfer can be executed using multiple controller scans to minimize the per scan impact on the primary controller. During the transfer, the control system is not considered redundant because the standby controller is not capable of assuming control if the primary controller fails.

Scan and transfer times of the controllers can be reduced by configuring a portion of RAM as an area not to be included in the transfer of data between the controllers. Any area of data designated as a non-transfer area will not be included during a transfer of state RAM data from the primary to the standby controller. The system operator has flexibility in determining how much or how little state RAM is selected for transfer. However, state RAM that is associated with critical IO functions should be transferred in every scan. The operator can also select how much data gets transferred in all scans and how much gets transferred in pieces over multiple scans.

The controllers' executive programs are also upgradeable without having to shutdown the control system. During the upgrade, the control system is not considered to be in a redundant configuration. If the primary controller should fail prior to the upgrade being complete, the standby controller will not be available to gain control as the primary controller.

While specific embodiments have been illustrated and described, numerous modifications come to mind without significantly departing from the spirit of the invention and the scope of protection is only limited by the scope of the accompanying Claims.



CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An active standby system for a control system, the active standby system comprising:
  - 5 a first and a second controller, each controller having an operating state; and,
  - a high speed fiber optic network cable operably connecting the first and second controllers for transferring data between the controllers at a rate of at least 100 Mb/s.
- 10 2. The active standby system of claim 1 wherein each controller comprises:
  - a processor;
  - a co-processor;
  - 15 an operating system executed by the processor; and,
  - a co-operating system executed by the co-processor wherein the operating system and the co-operating system cooperate to transfer data between the first and second controllers.
- 20 3. The active standby system of claim 1, wherein each controller further comprises a network module having a network identifier wherein the network identifier is determined by the operating state of its respective controller.
- 25 4. The active standby system of claim 3 wherein each controller further comprises a remote IO head and each remote IO head is operably connected together and to a remote IO drop.

5. The active standby system of claim 4 further comprising at least one processor device operably connected to the first and second controllers.

6. The active standby system of claim 3 wherein the network identifier is an Internet Protocol address.

7. The active standby system of claim 3 wherein the network identifier is a Media Access Control address.

8. The active standby system of claim 1 wherein each controller is operably connected to a processor unit.

9. A method of providing an active standby control system comprising the steps of:

providing a first and a second controller, each controller having an operating state; and,

forming a network by operably connecting the controllers with a fiber optic cable for transferring data between the first controller and the second controller at a rate of at least 100 Mb/s.

10. The method of claim 9 further including the steps of:  
assigning a network identifier to each controller; and,  
sensing the operating state of each controller, wherein the network identifier of each controller is determined by the operating state of each respective controller.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein each controller comprises:  
a processor;  
a co-processor;

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12. The method of claim 9 wherein the network is an Ethernet network.

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placing one controller in a primary state and the other controller in a secondary state;

sensing the operating state of the primary mode controller;

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16. The method of claim 15 wherein the network is an Ethernet network.

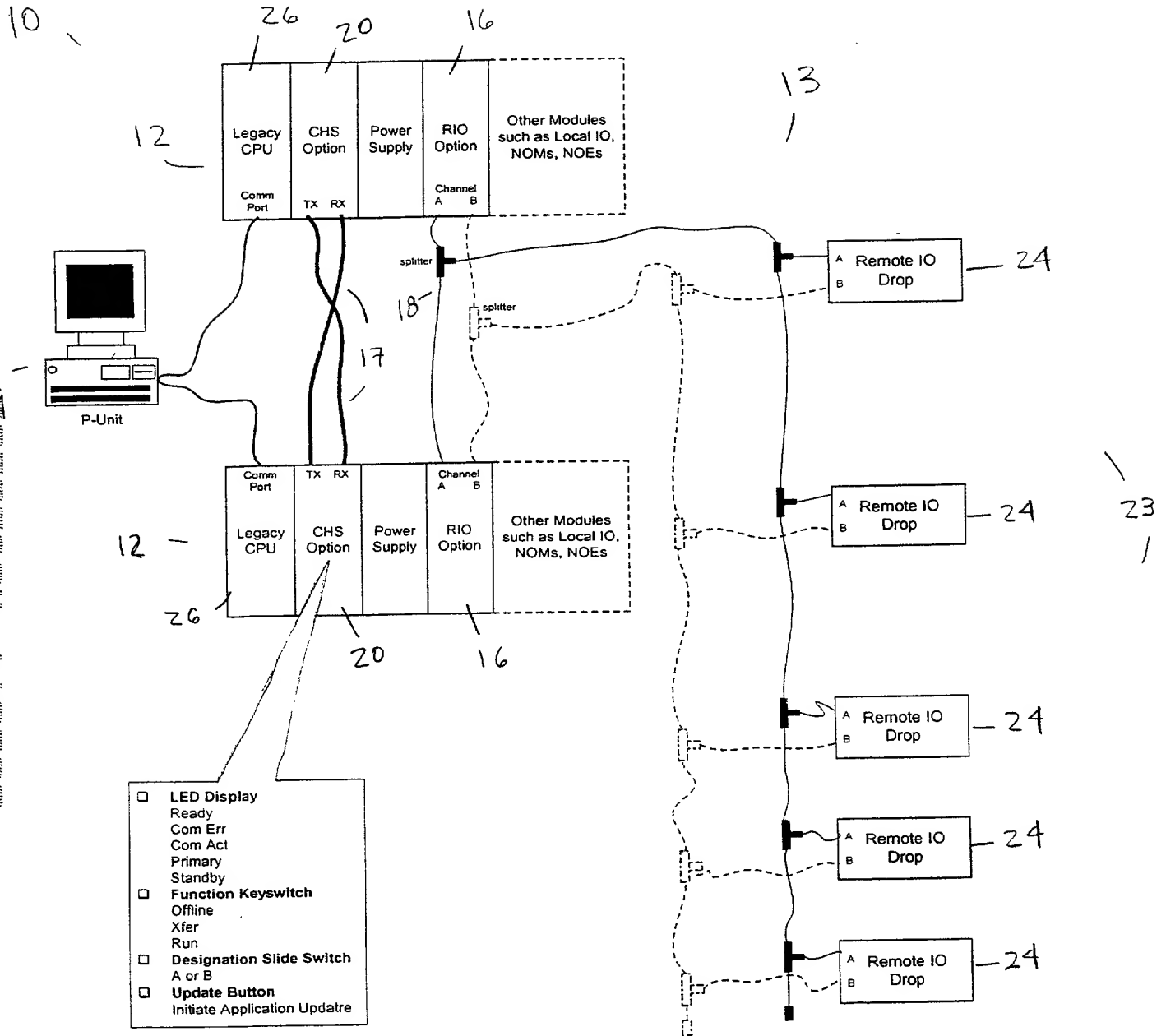
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20. The method of claim 15 wherein the processor, co-processor, operating system and co-operating system are embedded in Flash RAM.



10.



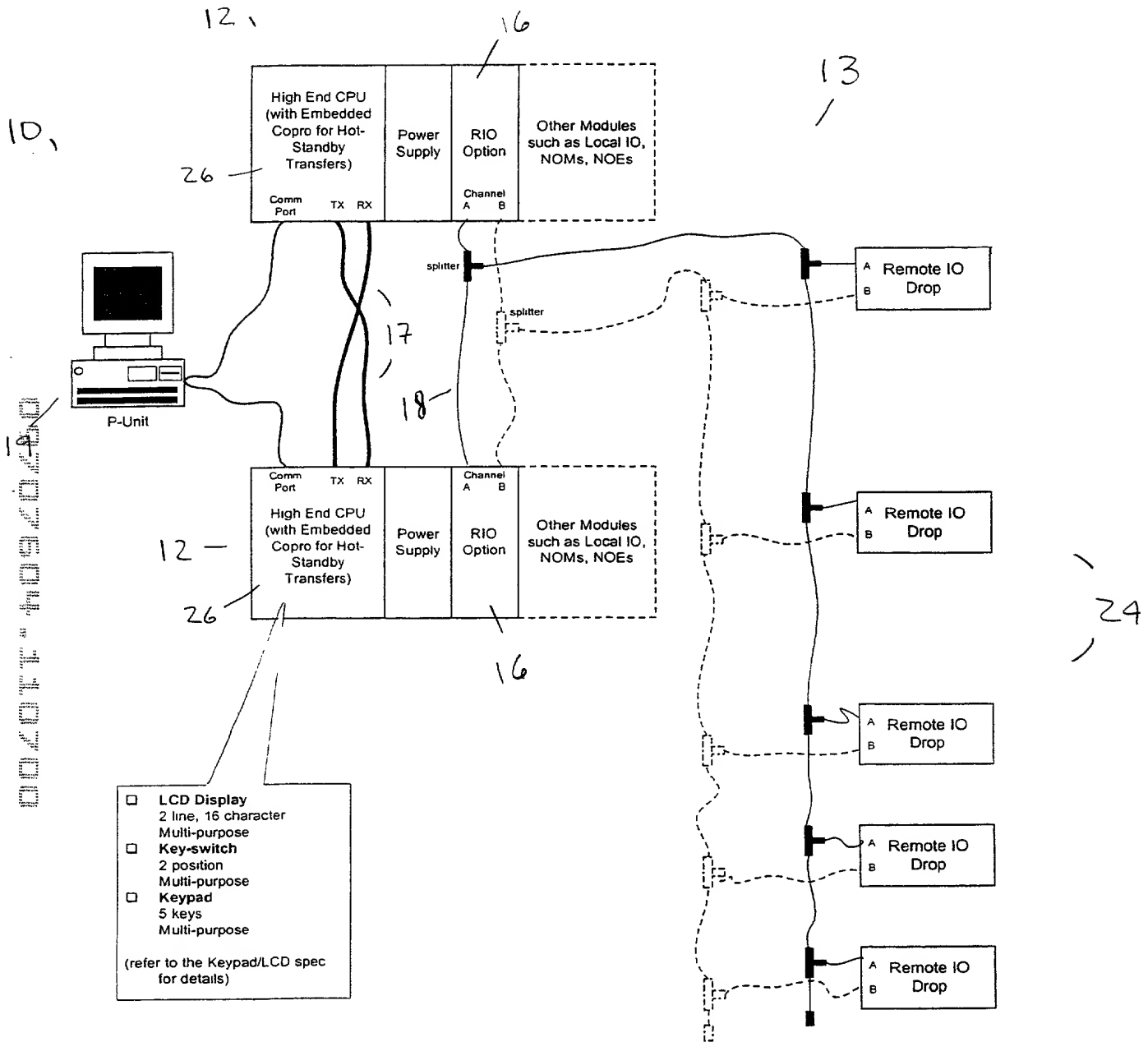


FIGURE 2

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CONTROLLER

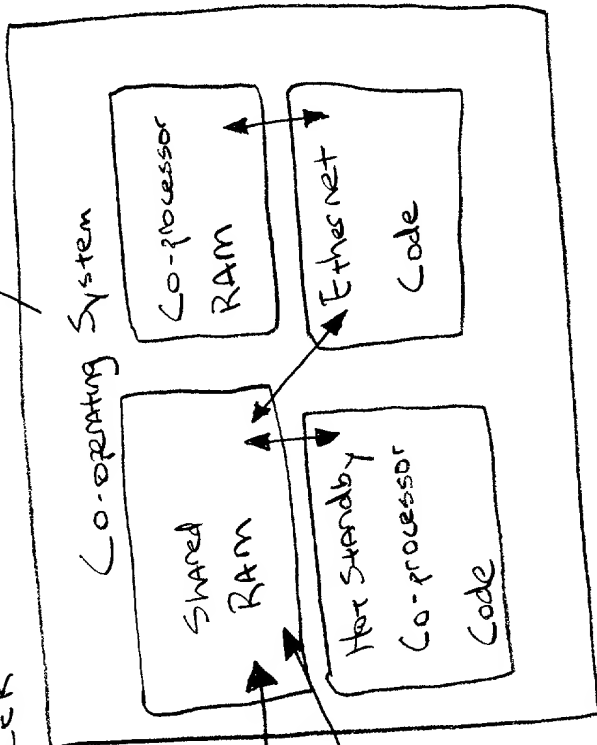
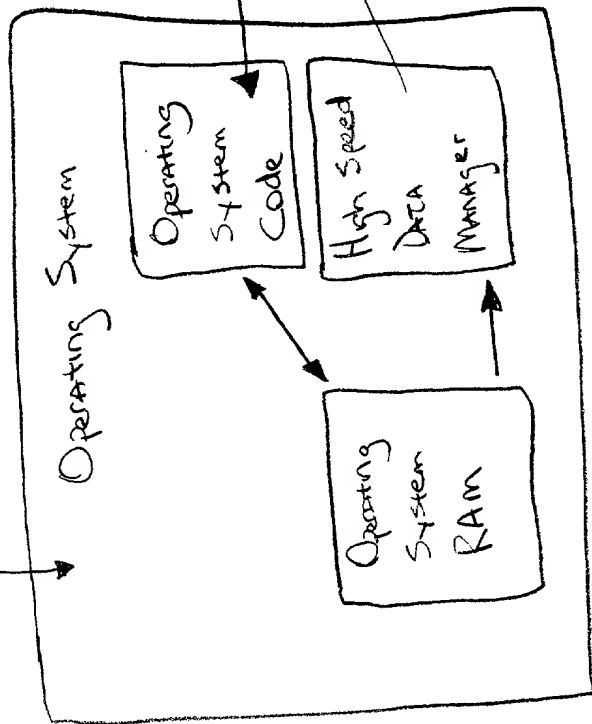


FIGURE 3



As a below-named inventor, I(We) hereby declare that:

(1) My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

(2) The below-named inventor(s) is/are the original, first inventor(s) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled "  ", Attorney Docket No. SAA-52, the specification of which:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Inventor's Signature  
  
\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Inventor(s)  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Inventor(s)

☐ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_

(3) I(We) hereby state that I(We) have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

(4) I(We) acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to the patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

(5) I(We) hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

Priority  
Claimed

<u>(Number)</u>	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	Yes or No
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Priority  
Claimed

(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	Yes or No
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(6) I(We) hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I(We) acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a), regarding events which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status)
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(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status)
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(7) I(We) hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

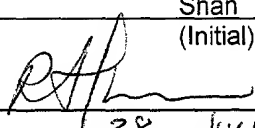
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Kareem M. Irfan, Registration No. 32,326  
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(8) I(We) hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are delivered to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Inventor's Full Name: Nan Shan Hwu  
(First) (Initial) (Last)

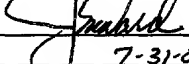
Inventor's Signature:   
Date of Execution: 28 July 2000

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Citizenship: USA

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(First) (Initial) (Last)

Inventor's Signature:   
Date of Execution: 7-31-00

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(Include number, street name, city, state, and country)

Citizenship: USA

Post Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If different from Residence Address)

Inventor's Full Name: Gerard  Picon  
(First) (Initial) (Last)

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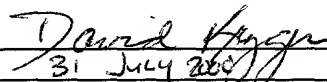
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Inventor's Full Name: David L. Kryger  
(First) (Initial) (Last)

Inventor's Signature:   
Date of Execution: 31 July 2000

Residence: 147 Turnpike Rd., Chelmsford, MA 01824, USA  
(Include number, street name, city, state, and country)

Citizenship: USA

Post Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If different from Residence Address)

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As a below-named inventor, I(We) hereby declare that:

(1) My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

(2) The below-named inventor(s) is/are the original, first inventor(s) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled " \_\_\_\_\_", Attorney Docket No. SAA-52, the specification of which:

☐ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_.

(3) I(We) hereby state that I(We) have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

(4) I(We) acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to the patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

(5) I(We) hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

Priority  
Claimed

(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	Yes or No
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Priority  
Claimed

(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	Yes or No
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(6) I(We) hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I(We) acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a), regarding events which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)

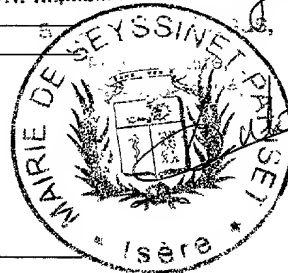
Inventor's Signature:  
Date of Execution:

4/12  
08/23/2001

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Date of Execution:

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